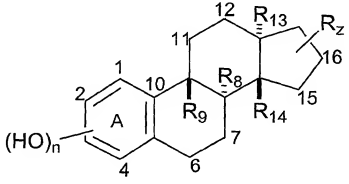
What is claimed is:

1. A process for treating a cytodegenerative disease comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a compound having cytoprotective activity of the formula (I), or a diastereomer configuration thereof:



(I)

wherein

the compound optionally has one or more unsaturated bonds in conjugation with the aromatic A-ring between carbons 6 and 7, 8 and 9, or 9 and 11, in which event one or both of R^8 and R^9 will be absent;

n ranges from 1 to 4;

R^8 and R^9, when present, are independently hydrogen or alkyl;

R^{13} is hydrogen, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl, halo, amido, sulfate or nitrate;

R^{14} is hydrogen or alkyl;

R^z is hydrogen, hydroxy, oxo, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl, heterocycloalkyl, heterocycloalkenyl, halo, amido, sulfate, or nitrate; and,

carbon 17 and carbon 3 are not each hydroxy-substituted when (i) n is 1, (ii) the compound does not contain at least

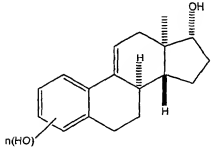
one unsaturated bond in conjugation with the aromatic A-ring, (iii) R^8, R^9 and R^{14} are hydrogen, and (iv) R^{13} is methyl.

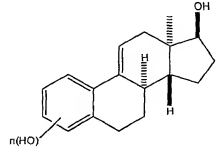
2. The process of claim 1 wherein a carbon-carbon double bond is present in the compound between carbons 9 and 11.

3. The process of claim 2 wherein R^8 and R^{14} are hydrogen and R^{13} is methyl.

4. The process of claim 3 wherein R^z is hydroxy.

5. The process of claim 4 wherein the compound is selected from:





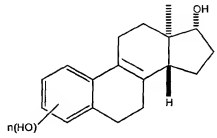
wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

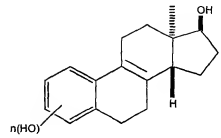
6. The process of claim 1 wherein a carbon-carbon double bond is present in the compound between carbons 8 and 9.

7. The process of claim 6 wherein R^{14} is hydrogen and R^{13} is methyl.

8. The process of claim 7 wherein R^z is hydroxy.

9. The process of claim 8 wherein the compound is selected from:





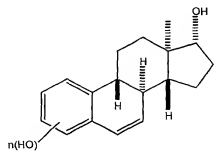
wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

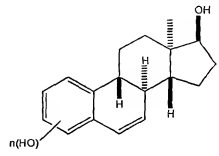
10. The process of claim 1 wherein a carbon-carbon double bond is present in the compound between carbons 6 and 7.

11. The process of claim 10 wherein R^8, R^9 and R^{14} are hydrogen and R^{13} is methyl.

12. The process of claim 11 wherein R^z is hydroxy.

13. The process of claim 12 wherein the compound is selected from:





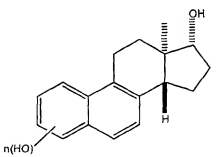
wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

14. The process of claim 1 wherein a carbon-carbon double bond is present in the compound between carbons 6 and 7 and 8 and 9.

15. The process of claim 14 wherein R^{14} is hydrogen and R^{13} is methyl.

16. The process of claim 15 wherein R^{z} is hydroxy.

17. The process of claim 16 wherein the compound is selected from:

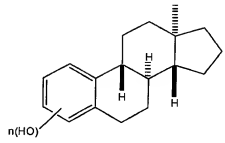


wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

18. The process of claim 1 wherein R^{8}, R^{9} and R^{14} are hydrogen and R^{13} is methyl.

19. The process of claim 18 wherein R^{z} is hydrogen.

20. The process of claim 19 wherein the compound is:

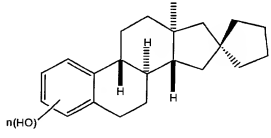


wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

21. The process of claim 18 wherein R^z is cycloalkyl or cycloalkenyl.

22. The process of claim 21 wherein R^z is a spiro structure, a carbon in the D-ring of the compound also being a carbon in the cyclic R^z substituent.

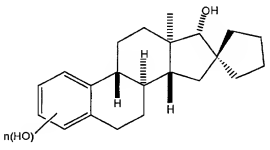
23. The process of claim 22 wherein the compound is:



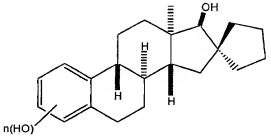
wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

24. The process of claim 23 wherein the D ring is additionally substituted with a hydroxy group or an oxo group.

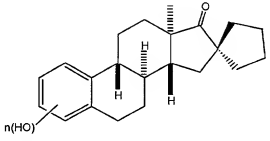
25. The process of claim 24 wherein the compound is selected from:



,



or,



wherein n is as defined in claim 1.

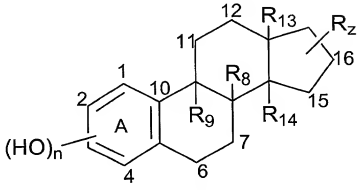
26. The process of claim 1 comprising administering a pharmaceutical composition comprising said compound and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, excipient or diluent.

27. The process of claim 1 wherein said subject is an animal.

28. The process of claim 1 wherein said subject is a human.

29. A process for treating a cytodegenerative disease comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a

compound having cytoprotective activity of formula (II), or a stereoisomeric configuration thereof:



(II)

wherein

the compound optionally has one or more unsaturated bonds in conjugation with the aromatic A-ring between carbons 6 and 7, 8 and 9, or 9 and 11, in which event one or both of R^8 and R^9 will be absent;

n ranges from 1 to 4;

R^8 and R^9, when present, are independently hydrogen or alkyl;

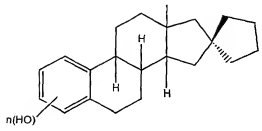
R^{13} is hydrogen, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl, halo, amido, sulfate or nitrate;

R^{14} is hydrogen or alkyl;

R^z is substituted or unsubstituted cycloalkyl or cycloalkenyl, or substituted or unsubstituted heterocycloalkyl or heterocycloalkenyl.

30. The process of claim 29 wherein R^z is a spiro structure, a carbon in the D-ring of the compound also being a carbon in the cyclic Rz substituent.

31. The process of claim 30 wherein the compound is:



wherein n is defined in claim 29.

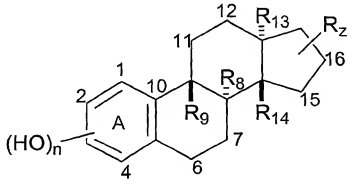
32. The process of claim 31 wherein the compound has the configuration R8α, R9β, R13α, and R14β.

33. The process of claim 31 wherein the compound has the configuration R8β, R9α, R13β, and R14α.

34. The process of claim 29 wherein the compound has the configuration R8α, R9β, R13α, and R14β.

35. The process of claim 29 wherein the compound has the configuration R8β, R9α, R13β, and R14α.

36. A compound having cytoprotective activity, the compound having the formula (I), or a diastereomeric configuration thereof:



(I)

wherein

the compound optionally has one or more unsaturated bonds in conjugation with the aromatic A ring between carbons 6 and 7, 8 and 9, or 9 and 11, in which event one or both of R^8 and R^9 will be absent;

n ranges from 1 to 4;

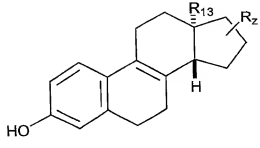
R^8 and R^9, when present, are independently hydrogen or alkyl;

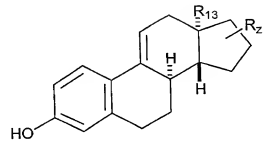
R^{13} is hydrogen, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl, halo, amido, sulfate or nitrate;

R^{14} is hydrogen or alkyl;

R^z is hydrogen, hydroxy, oxo, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl, heterocycloalkyl, heterocycloalkenyl, halo, amido, sulfate, or nitrate, provided however, when (i) the compound does not contain at least one unsaturated bond in conjugation with the aromatic A-ring, (ii) R^8, R^9 and R^{14} are hydrogen, and (iii) R^{13} is methyl, R^z is other than hydrogen and is not hydroxy or oxo when the D-ring is only substituted at carbon 17.

37. The compound of claim 36 wherein, when the compound has one of the following structures:





wherein R^{13} is methyl and R^z is other than hydroxy.

38. The compound of claim 37 wherein R^z is cycloalkyl or cycloalkenyl.